

IRS Denies Christian Nonprofit Tax Exemption Status for Link to Republican Party

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is denying a Christian nonprofit tax-exempt status because its values and the promotion of those values are “typically affiliated with the Republican party and candidates.”

The purpose of Christians Engaged is to “awaken, motivate, educate and empower ordinary believers in Jesus Christ” in praying, voting for and engaging with political spheres. The organization had requested a tax exemption status in late 2019.

In its denial letter, the IRS claimed such actions of encouraging Americans to educate themselves on the political process and the guidance of this education with resources, training and mentorship groups from a biblical perspective are deemed unfit for a “nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.”

According to a press release from First Liberty, who represents Christians Engaged, the IRS “illegally discriminated against the organization’s religious viewpoint,” and by doing so, “violated its own regulations.”

First Liberty protested the action and detailed the exact reasons why the denial sets a double standard and should be remedied.

According to lead counsel Lea Patterson, the letter from the IRS “invents a nonexistent requirement that exempt organizations be neutral on public policy issues; [it] incorrectly concludes that Christians Engaged primarily serves

private, nonexempt purposes rather than public, exempt purposes because he thinks its beliefs overlap with the Republican Party's policy positions; and [it] violates the First Amendment's Free Speech, and Free Exercise, and Establishment clauses by engaging in both viewpoint discrimination and religious discrimination."

First Liberty concludes the letter with a request for the "proposed denial letter" be rescinded and a "favorable determination letter" be issued.

"The IRS states in an official letter that Biblical values are exclusively Republican. That might be news to President Biden, who is often described as basing his political ideology on his religious beliefs," said Patterson. "Only a politicized IRS could see Americans who pray for their nation, vote in every election, and work to engage others in the political process as a threat. The IRS violated its own regulations in denying tax exempt status because Christians Engaged teaches biblical values."

Christians Engaged president Bunni Pounds responded to the rejection, "We just want to encourage more people to vote and participate in the political process. How can anyone be against that?" {eoa}

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